

# The Motor Road Test No. 22/59

**Make:** Renault

**Type:** Dauphine Gordini

**Makers:** Renault Ltd., Western Avenue, Acton, W.3.

(Parent factory: Regie Nationale Renault, Billancourt, France.)

## Test Data

World copyright reserved, no unauthorized reproduction in whole or in part.

**CONDITIONS:** Weather: Warm and damp. (Temperature 66°-72°F., Barometer 29.5-29.6 in. Hg.) Surface: Tarmac and concrete. Fuel: Premium-grade pump petrols (approx. 96 Research Method Octane Rating).

### INSTRUMENTS

Speedometer at 30 m.p.h. .. .. 7% fast  
 Speedometer at 60 m.p.h. .. .. 7% fast  
 Distance recorder .. .. . 7% fast

### WEIGHT

Kerb weight (unladen, but with oil, coolant and fuel for approx. 50 miles) .. .. 13 cwt.  
 Front/rear distribution of kerb weight .. 39½/60½  
 Weight laden as tested .. .. . 16½ cwt.

### MAXIMUM SPEEDS

Mean lap speed around banked circuit 73.7 m.p.h.  
 Best one way ¼-mile on straight .. .. 75.6 m.p.h.  
 "Maximile" Speed. (Timed quarter mile after one mile accelerating from rest.)

Mean of opposite runs .. .. 72.2 m.p.h.  
 Best one-way time equals .. .. 73.8 m.p.h.

### Speed in gears

Max. speed in 3rd gear .. .. 70 m.p.h.  
 Max. speed in 2nd gear .. .. 48 m.p.h.  
 Max. speed in 1st gear .. .. 27 m.p.h.

### FUEL CONSUMPTION

57½ m.p.g. at constant 30 m.p.h. on level.  
 52½ m.p.g. at constant 40 m.p.h. on level.  
 47½ m.p.g. at constant 50 m.p.h. on level.  
 40 m.p.g. at constant 60 m.p.h. on level.  
 34½ m.p.g. at constant 70 m.p.h. on level.

**Overall Fuel Consumption** for 1,146 miles, 30.3 gallons, equals 37.8 m.p.g. (7.5 litres/100 km.)

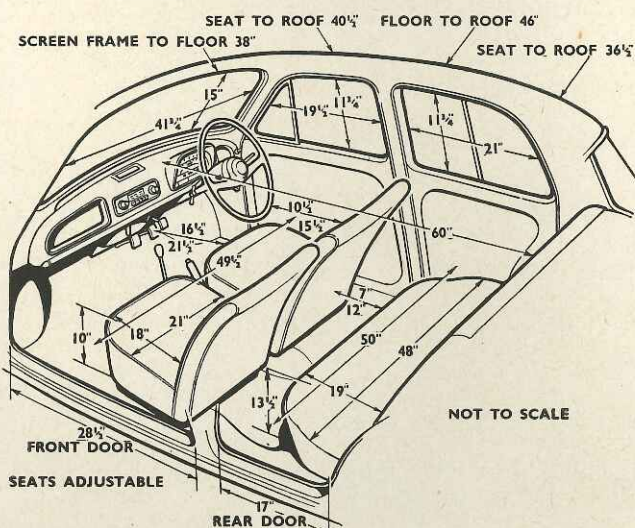
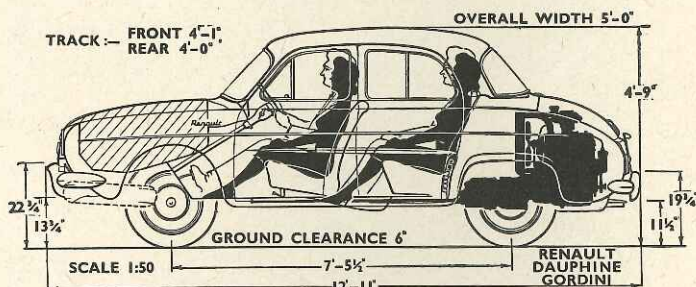
**Touring Fuel Consumption** (m.p.g. at steady speed midway between 30 m.p.h. and maximum, less 5% allowance for acceleration) 44 m.p.g.  
 Fuel tank capacity (maker's figure) .. 7 gallons

### STEERING

Turning circle between kerbs:  
 Left .. .. . 28½ feet  
 Right .. .. . 27½ feet  
 Turns of steering wheel from lock to lock 4½

### BRAKES from 30 m.p.h.

0.95g retardation (equivalent to 31½ ft. stopping distance) with 85 lb. pedal pressure  
 0.74g retardation (equivalent to 40½ ft. stopping distance) with 75 lb. pedal pressure  
 0.39g retardation (equivalent to 77 ft. stopping distance) with 50 lb. pedal pressure  
 0.12g retardation (equivalent to 250 ft. stopping distance) with 25 lb. pedal pressure



### ACCELERATION TIMES from standstill

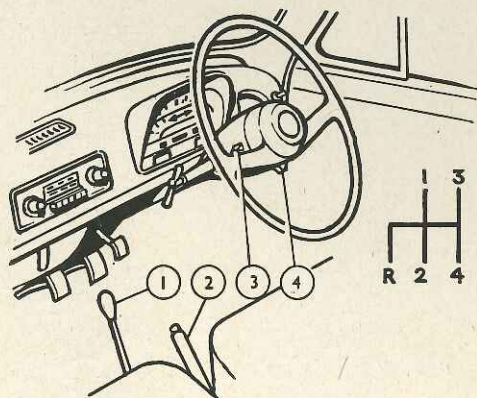
0-30 m.p.h.	6.4 sec.
0-40 m.p.h.	11.3 sec.
0-50 m.p.h.	17.9 sec.
0-60 m.p.h.	28.2 sec.
0-70 m.p.h.	50.6 sec.
Standing quarter mile	23.7 sec.

### ACCELERATION TIMES on Upper Ratios

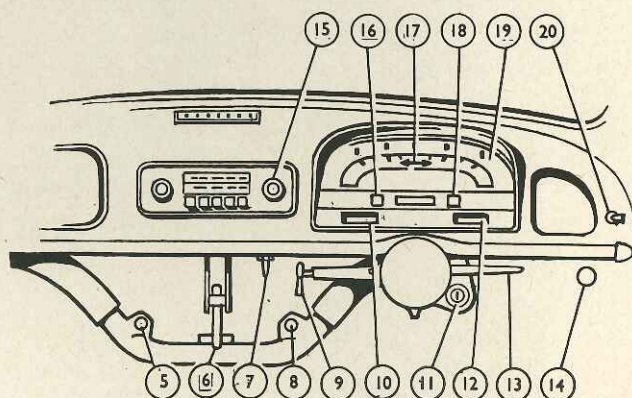
	Top gear	3rd gear
10-30 m.p.h.	15.0 sec.	10.6 sec.
20-40 m.p.h.	16.1 sec.	10.7 sec.
30-50 m.p.h.	17.3 sec.	11.7 sec.
40-60 m.p.h.	22.7 sec.	16.9 sec.
50-70 m.p.h.	37.9 sec.	—

### HILL CLIMBING at sustained steady speeds

Max. gradient on top gear	1 in 15.4 (Tapley 145 lb./ton)
Max. gradient on 3rd gear	1 in 10.6 (Tapley 210 lb./ton)
Max. gradient on 2nd gear	1 in 6.9 (Tapley 320 lb./ton)



1, Gear lever. 2, Handbrake. 3, Horn note selector, town or country. 4, Parking light switch. 5, Heater control. 6, Bonnet catch release. 7, Heater fan switch. 8, Demister



control. 9, Horn, lights and headlamp dip switch. 10, Fuel contents gauge. 11, Anti-theft lock, ignition and starter switch. 12, Water thermometer. 13, Direction indicator switch. 14, Windscreen washer button. 15, Radio control. 16,

Dynamo charge warning light. 17, Direction indicator warning light. 18, Oil pressure warning light. 19, Speedometer and distance recorder. 20, Windscreen wipers switch.

# The Renault Dauphine Gordini

France's Best-selling  
850 c.c. Saloon in  
Faster and Smarter  
British-built Form

**B**EST seller amongst French cars, the Renault Dauphine is a rear-engined 850 c.c. four-door saloon with truly Parisian chic, which when built and sold in Britain also acquires a measure of exclusiveness. The Gordini version of the Dauphine which this summer became available from the Acton factory allows those who can afford an 18% higher price to have a car in which 22% more power lifts the top speed towards the 75 m.p.h. mark, a special gearbox gives four forward speeds instead of three, and there is smartened interior and exterior finish.

## Limited Tuning

There is some risk that application of the name Gordini to this model may lead to misconceptions about its character, frightening away from a charming little saloon potential customers who, associating Amed e Gordini with racing single-seaters, identify the Gordini Dauphine too closely with the very highly tuned Renaults which have triumphed over much larger cars in some International Rallies. In fact, this is a model of very much broader appeal, which is indeed tuned for extra speed but only to that modest degree which has been thought compatible with smoothly flexible performance around town and with reliability and durability when using premium grades of pump petrol. With a true maximum speed of 73.7 m.p.h. and the ability to accelerate from rest to 50 m.p.h. in 17.9 seconds, this is quite a brisk car for its size, but such fuel economy figures as the 47½ m.p.g. petrol flowmeter reading noted when cruising at 50 m.p.h. on the level emphasize that its speed is not obtained extravagantly.

Whilst its overall dimensions have not been cut down at the expense of stability and good looks, this is a compact enough car to be at a considerable advantage in crowded traffic. Extra inches of overall



CONVENTIONAL in general proportions, but with its rear-mounted engine disclosed by cooling air intakes ahead of the rear wheels instead of at the front of the car, the Renault Dauphine is one of the best-looking small four-door saloons.

length in comparison with the smallest cars are fully offset by the compact 28-foot turning circle, allowing the Dauphine to get into and out of parking places which are too small for most other vehicles to use.

Within its shapely and well-streamlined envelope, this car has just the amount of room which is required to make four adults reasonably comfortable, and there is a separate forward-hinged door for each passenger. The separately adjustable front seats do not move far enough back to let a 6-foot man get his knees anywhere near to straightness, despite which comfort for adult rear seat passengers depends upon these seats being set forward by at least one notch. Slim doors allow quite good elbow room inside a car of only 60 inches external width, but the front toeboard and pedals lie between the front wheel arches and width at this point in the body is rather severely limited. Nicely carpeted and with a flat floor, the body interior is as well designed as the exterior.

Quite a long nose gives this rear-engined car orthodox proportions, there being room for the spare wheel to slide horizontally into a shelf ahead of the I.F.S. where it is concealed behind the front number plate. Above this compartment, there is a luggage locker which, although accommodating the battery at one side (and on

our test model other space-filling extras in the form of the radio power pack and a windscreen washer reservoir) can carry quite a big trunk. The lid of this locker is front-hinged, a reassuring layout from the point of view of accidental opening but one which makes the loading of heavy trunks awkward: as the locker lid is released from inside the body, luggage is protected by lock-and-key only when the car itself is locked up, so that despite a combined ignition and steering lock, windows often have to be closed when the car is parked in hot summer sun.

## Accessible Engine

At the opposite end of the car, the rear mounted engine has the items which are likely to need occasional attention very readily accessible. A radiator filler which does not let the header-tank water level be seen invites unnecessarily frequent topping up, at the expense of accumulated deposits and diluted anti-freeze, unless the electrical temperature indicator on the fascia is trusted implicitly. The filler for a 7-gallon fuel tank is alongside the engine.

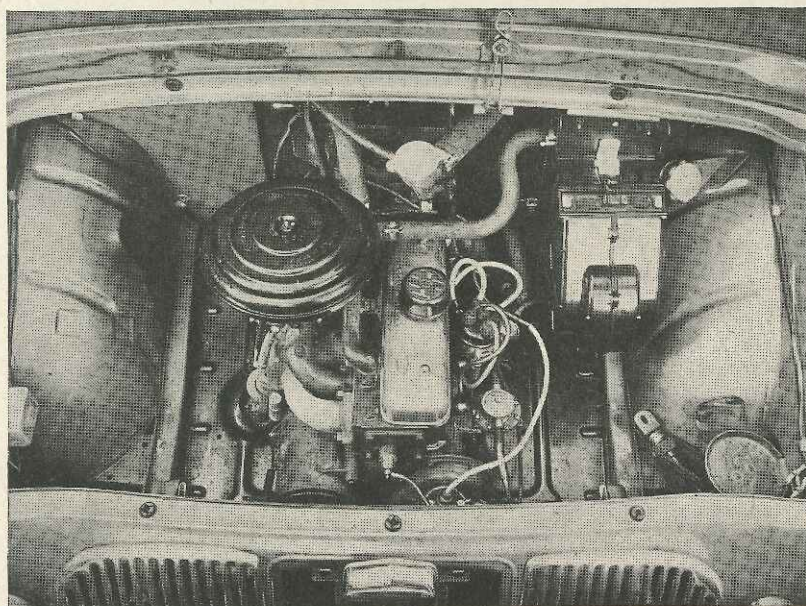
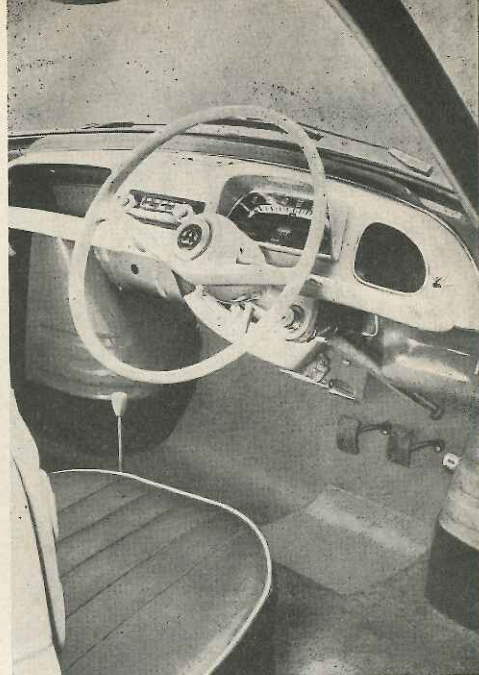
Although this model has a larger Solex carburetter than the normal Dauphine it retains the electrically-controlled automatic choke; so long as the accelerator

## In Brief

Price	£598, plus purchase tax	£250 5s. 10d.
	equals	£848 5s. 10d.
Capacity	...	845 c.c.
Unladen kerb weight	...	13 cwt.
Acceleration:		
20-40 m.p.h. in top gear	...	16.1 sec.
0-50 m.p.h. through gears	...	17.9 sec.
Maximum top gear gradient	...	1 in 15.4
Maximum speed	...	73.7 m.p.h.
"Maximile" speed	...	72.2 m.p.h.
Touring fuel consumption	...	44 m.p.g.
Gearing: 14.75 m.p.h. in top gear at 1,000 r.p.m.; 28.1 m.p.h. at 1,000 ft./min. piston speed.		



SPACE for a large trunk is available in the front luggage locker (left) which dwarfs a box of test equipment. Grouped together are the battery, brake fluid reservoir, and (as optional extras) radio power-pack and screen washer water reservoir.



## Renault Dauphine Gordini

is not depressed (a contrast to American practice) this gives prompt starting and a reliable fast tick-over. The control layout is very neat and simple, the same fingertip lever behind the steering wheel which switches on and dips the lights also being pressed to sound the horn—a switch selects loud or soft approach warning for town or country. The fascia is very neat looking, a quadrant speedometer which is much more legible than most of its kind being supplemented by fuel contents and water temperature indicators, but the mottled off-white finish of the fascia goes against the prevailing fashion for non-reflecting matt black surfaces below the windscreen. Sensibly, there is crash padding along the top of the windscreen as well as along the bottom of the fascia panel, but British-built cars have hard plastic sun visors instead of the soft variety used in France. Heat-wave conditions during our test showed us that the car does not overheat, but gave us no chance to assess the improved fresh-air heating system, which has an almost inaudible fan to circulate air through a rear-mounted heat exchanger to the body and screen interior.

In respect of the ratios which it provides, its quietness and the quality of the synchromesh on the upper three gears, the new four-speed gearbox immensely increases the attractiveness of this model for a keen driver. For a small car with a

TUNED to develop extra power without serious loss of docility, the Gordini 4-speed power unit is revealed as having ample space around it when a lid at the back of the car is lifted. On the right of the engine are the petrol filler, interior heater, jack and tool roll. The Gordini model has a brightwork grille over the normal Dauphine rear hot-air outlet louvres. Single-bulb parking lamps on the rear quarters are a useful Continental feature now legal in England.

free-revving engine, the ratios chosen are quite high, as witness the ability to exceed 45 m.p.h. in second gear and to touch 70 m.p.h. in third gear, but the 5,000 r.p.m. peak of the power curve corresponds to approximately 21½, 38 and 55 m.p.h. in the lower gears and it is not normally advantageous to exceed these speeds by more than about 10% when seeking maximum acceleration. Whilst the gears engage smoothly and quietly even when a driver is hurrying, it must unfortunately be noted that the gear lever is placed inconveniently far forward on the floor of the car, kicks to and fro very vigorously as movement of the power unit on its flexible mountings is magnified by a remote-control linkage, and is vague in across-the-gate feel. Nevertheless, the gear-change improves greatly with familiarity, and this is a car in which the lower gears are used a great deal so that, stripped of flattery from an unusually optimistic distance recorder, the overall consumption for our 1,146-mile test was only 37.8 m.p.g., a creditable figure but less brilliant than steady-speed readings in top gear had suggested as possible.

Acceleration of this model in top gear is roughly what might be expected of a small car, as indicated by the 20 to 40 m.p.h. time of 16.1 seconds. Smoothness of the engine makes the top gear acceleration seem more leisurely than it is, and in

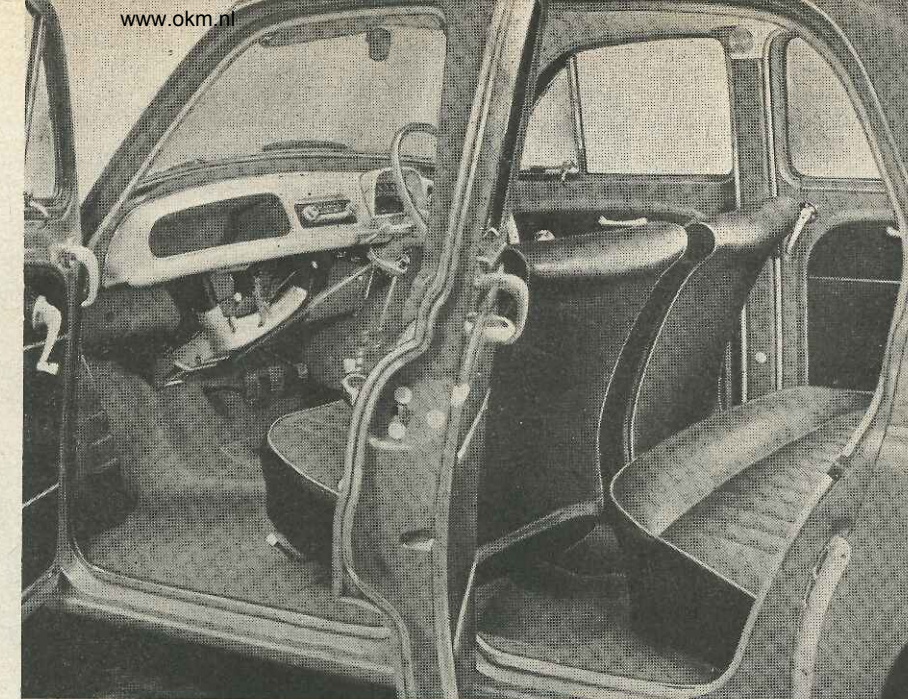


COMPACT but with four doors and able to carry four adults, the body has hinged ventilators and wind-down windows on the front doors, sliding windows for the rear compartment. On the left may be seen the neat facia layout with small and large glove compartments, and the flat floor between rather wide wheel arches.

fact it is only above 35 m.p.h. that this car is livelier in top gear than a normal Dauphine. Using the gearbox, very brisk progress through traffic becomes possible, especially when the car is lightly laden, and on the open road the car cruises at 65-70 m.p.h. as quietly as do cars of double the size.

When a car weighing only 13 cwt. is expected to be able to carry at least 7 cwt. of passengers and luggage, suspension design presents very real problems which seem to have been quite well solved by the Renault engineers. Our test car did not have the auxiliary air springs now being fitted to French-built Dauphines, but even so its riding struck a sensible compromise; when the driver was alone the ride was fairly lively but never harsh, and when a full load was aboard the suspension felt softer but not embarrassingly flexible. The modest unsprung weight of independently sprung rear wheels, and the fact that with a rear-mounted engine extra passengers are carried close to the centre of gravity, no doubt helped in the provision of good comfort at all times.

Handling qualities of this car, like the riding, seem to be at their best in the half-laden condition, when there is a comfortable but not exaggerated degree of understeer unless the cornering speed is so high that the tail starts to break away. Fully laden, the car was more utterly stable and slower in its response to the helm, whereas when completely unladen it was very nimble although with the swing-axle rear suspension more "on tiptoe" fierce manœuvres could start the rear wheels



behaving rather erratically. Competition models have, we believe, usually had their rear springs set down somewhat, but this reduces the range of suspension movement if the car is fully laden. Cornering is at all times almost completely free from body-roll, and the Michelin tyres continue to give good road-holding in wet weather.

Geared at  $4\frac{1}{2}$  turns from extreme to extreme of the very compact lock, the rack and pinion steering needs unexpectedly large wheel movements for sharp turns, yet on the test model rather strong settings of the centring springs prevented the steering being as light as the car's low weight would make one expect. The brakes also needed unexpectedly high pedal pressures before giving much response, perhaps due to the use of

harder fade-resistant linings on this faster Dauphine model, a criticism which was emphasized because in converting a French-designed car to right hand drive the brake pedal has been brought uncomfortably close to the steering column. Actual braking power is ample, and the central pull-up handbrake is both convenient and effective.

With all the practical and economic advantages associated with cars of under 13 ft. length and under 1-litre engine size, the Renault Dauphine combines distinctive good looks. The addition of this Gordini model to the range, slightly smarter and with an extra gear ratio as well as 22% more power, should usefully broaden the market for these cars in Britain and elsewhere.

The World Copyright of this article and illustrations is strictly reserved © Temple Press Limited, 1959

## Specification

<b>Engine</b>	
Cylinders ... ..	4
Bore ... ..	58 mm.
Stroke ... ..	80 mm.
Cubic capacity ... ..	845 c.c.
Piston area ... ..	16.4 sq. in.
Valves ... ..	O.h.v. (pushrods)
Compression ratio ... ..	7.75/1
Carburettor ... ..	Solex 32 PICTB
Fuel pump ... ..	S.E.V. 461 mechanical
Ignition timing control ... ..	Centrifugal and vacuum
Oil filter ... ..	None
Max. power (gross) ... ..	37.8 b.h.p.
at ... ..	5,000 r.p.m.
Piston speed at max. b.h.p. ... ..	2,625 ft./min.

<b>Transmission</b>	
Clutch ... ..	Ferodo $6\frac{1}{2}$ in. single dry plate
Top gear (s/m) ... ..	4.67
3rd gear (s/m) ... ..	6.38
2nd gear (s/m) ... ..	9.17
1st gear ... ..	16.17
Reverse ... ..	16.17
Final drive ... ..	8x35 spiral bevel
Top gear m.p.h. at 1,000 r.p.m. ... ..	14.75
Top gear m.p.h. at 1,000 ft./min. piston speed ... ..	28.1

<b>Chassis</b>	
Brakes ... ..	Lockheed hydraulic, single leading shoe
Brake drum internal diameter ... ..	9 in.
Friction lining area ... ..	82.5 sq. in.
Suspension:	
Front: Independent transverse wishbones, coil springs and anti-roll bar.	
Rear: Independent by coil springs and divided axle.	
Shock absorbers ... ..	Alliquant telescopic
Steering gear ... ..	Rack and pinion
Tyres ... ..	Michelin 145-15 (tubed)

## Coachwork and Equipment

Starting handle ... ..	Yes
Battery mounting ... ..	Forward luggage boot
Jack ... ..	Screw
Jacking points ... ..	Frame members under rear doors

Standard tool kit: Jack, combined wheelbrace and starting handle, screwdriver, plug spanner, 3 set spanners, tool roll.

Exterior lights: 2 headlamps (with pilot bulb sidelamps); 2 rear, stop and flasher combined; number plate light; parking lights on rear quarters.

Number of electrical fuses ... .. None

Direction indicators ... .. Self-cancelling flashers

Windscreen wipers ... .. Electrical 2-blade self-parking

Windscreen washers ... .. Trico manual double jet

Sun visors ... .. Two

Instruments: Speedometer with non-decimal non-trip distance recorder, fuel gauge, coolant thermometer.

Warning lights: Dynamo charge, flashing turn indicators, oil pressure gauge.

Locks: With ignition key ... Ignition, steering, both front doors

Glove lockers ... .. Two on dashboard

Map pockets ... .. None

Parcel shelves ... .. One under rear window

Ashtrays ... .. One on facia

Cigar lighters ... .. None

Interior lights: Lamps on both door pillars with manual and courtesy switches.

Interior heater: Fresh air type with screen demisters, as standard equipment.

Car radio ... .. Optional extra, Motorola type 821 or 621

Extras available: Roof rack, road lamps, radio, body embellishers, badge bar.

Upholstery material ... .. Leatherette

Floor covering ... .. Carpet

Exterior colours standardized ... .. 4

Alternative body styles: None (Dauphine also available at lower cost with 30 b.h.p. engine and 3-speed gearbox).

## Maintenance

Sump ... ..	$4\frac{1}{2}$ pints, S.A.E.20 or 10w/30 multigrade, summer and winter
Gearbox and differential combined: ... ..	$2\frac{1}{2}$ pints, S.A.E. 80 E.P. summer and winter.
Steering gear lubricant ... ..	Grease
Cooling system capacity ... ..	8 pints (2 drain taps) and 1 plug
Chassis lubrication: By grease gun every 1,500 miles to 10 points	
Ignition timing: 6 to 8 mm. (0.24 to 0.31 in.) on crankshaft pulley b.t.d.c.	
Contact-breaker gap ... ..	0.016 to 0.020 in.
Sparking plug type ... ..	AC type F45
Sparking plug gap ... ..	0.020 to 0.027 in.

Valve timing:	
Inlet opens 6° b.t.d.c. and closes 30° a.b.d.c.	
Exhaust opens 45° b.b.d.c. and closes 7° a.t.d.c.	
Tapet clearances (cold) Inlet ... ..	0.005 in.
Exhaust ... ..	0.008 in.
Front wheel toe-in 3 to 5 mm. (0.12 to 0.19 in.)	
Camber angle ... ..	1° 20'
Castor angle ... ..	10°
Steering swivel pin inclination ... ..	10°
Tyre pressures:	
Front ... ..	15 lb.
Rear ... ..	23 lb.
Brake fluid ... ..	Lockheed, S.A.E. spec. 70 R1
Battery type and capacity: Oldham 3E57-1MD 6-volt 100 amp. hr.	